

# A LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE TRANSITION TASKS

Welcome to the A Level English Literature course! Here are some activities to complete through the summer that you will need to bring to your first lesson in September. We will refer to these and provide feedback in the first few lessons!

Miss Hitchens and Mrs McDonnell

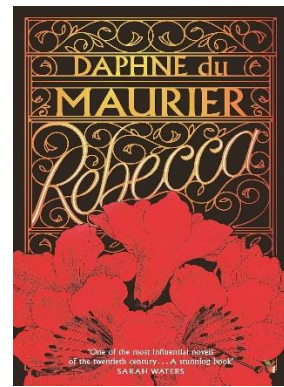
**ZHS**

It must be this version!



## TEXTS TO PURCHASE FOR SEPTEMBER

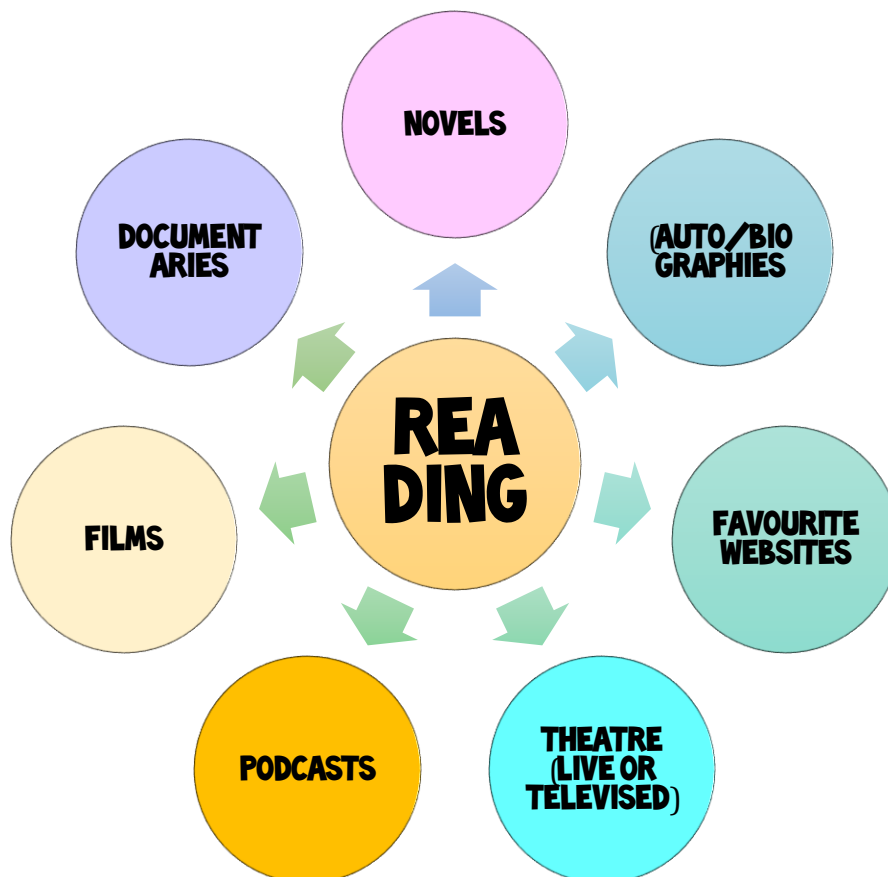
These will be the first texts that you study on the course!



**LML**

## 1. THE LITERATURE OF MY SUMMER...

We often think about literature as simply being novels, drama and poetry. However, 'writing' exists in many forms as do lots of other relevant cultural activities. These also tell us a lot about your interests. Populate the mind-map with examples from your summer...



Reading for Purpose:  
'Read Like A...'



# YOUR TASKS

There are four tasks for you to complete:

- A running-record of the reading you have done through the summer (**on the front page**)
- A task related to *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen for Miss Hitchens (**90 minutes**)
- A task related to *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier for Mrs McDonnell (**90 minutes**)
- A critical writing task for us both (**60 minutes**)

And why not 'Take It Further'? Why not find out as much as possible about Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, du Maurier, and *Rebecca*? Being informed is a valuable skill in Literature!

'Take it Further'  
Tasks (TIF)



## 2. A DOLL'S HOUSE BY HENRIK IBSEN

Ibsen – behind Shakespeare – is arguably the best-known European playwright and his plays are performed extensively around the world. He is known as the 'father of Dramatic Realism', which was a theatrical form new to late-nineteenth-century theatre. Probably one of the most similar style to this on the television are soap operas or other television dramas.



### DRAMATIC + REALISM

What is actually constructed to create drama as part of the plot, e.g. secrets, murders, revelations, conflicting characters who cross paths, etc

What looks 'real', e.g. the setting, the types of characters featured, accents, historical or social events and activities, etc

Dramatic realism is therefore seeming real-life scenarios but where the playwright has created deliberate structures and events to ensure drama. It's a bit like Christmas in *Eastenders* where it's guaranteed whatever plots have been building-up will cause chaos and consequences!

**TASK 1: Watch an episode of a TV soap opera or drama on screen. Take screen shots of the three most significant moments in the episode and paste them into the chart. Explain what is dramatic and what is 'real' in each moment.**

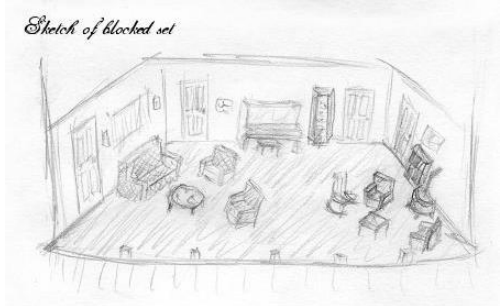
Programme: \_\_\_\_\_

Screenshot	How is this moment dramatically constructed? What drama happens?	What appears 'real' in this moment?


Unlike Shakespeare for example, Ibsen makes extensive use of stage directions as to create a very realistic set he needed to be specific. The stage directions also allow us to infer a lot about the play’s ideas too.

Here’s Ibsen’s initial design for the stage of *A Doll’s House*:

**TASK 2: Read the opening stage directions below. What could you potentially infer about the Helmer family in the play from it? Annotate your ideas around the text.**



*A pleasant room, tastefully but not expensively furnished. On the back wall, one door on the right leads to the entrance hall, a second door on the left leads to HELMER’s study. Between these two doors, a piano. In the middle of the left wall, a door; and downstage from it, a window. Near the window a round table with armchairs and a small sofa. In the right wall, upstage, a door; and on the same wall downstage, a porcelain stove with a couple of armchairs and a rocking-chair. Between the stove and the door a small table. Etchings on the walls. A whatnot with china and other small objets d’art; a small bookcase with books in handsome bindings. Carpet on the floor; a fire burns in the stove. A winter’s day.*

**TASK 3:** Read the opening to the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell below. Treating it as a stage direction, design the stage for a play of this novel, labelling what you would include. **TAKE IT FURTHER:** Explain what era you would choose to set the play in any why? 1984 could of course be inspiration but where will it be and why? Be creative – after all 1984 was in Orwell’s future when he wrote the novel in 1948!

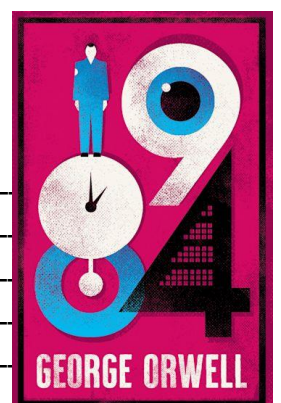


*It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.*

*The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a metre wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daylight hours. It was part of the economy drive in preparation for Hate Week. The flat was seven flights up, and Winston, who was thirty-nine and had a varicose ulcer above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way. On each landing, opposite the lift shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. **BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU**, the caption beneath it ran.*

**Design**

**Explanation** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# 1. **REBECCA** BY DAPHNE DU MAURIER

**Task 4:** Read the opening to the novel, *Rebecca*. Annotate it with both language and structural features you spot as you read. Explore what your first impression of Manderley is. ***How does du Maurier create a feeling of unease in the opening?***

Last night I dreamed I went to Manderley\* again. It seemed to me that I was passing through the iron gates that led to the driveway. The drive was just a narrow track now, its stony surface covered with grass and weeds. Sometimes, when I thought I had lost it, it would appear again, beneath a fallen tree or beyond a muddy pool formed by the winter rains. The trees had thrown out new low branches which stretched across my way. I came to the house suddenly, and stood there with my heart beating fast and tears filling my eyes.

There was Manderley, our Manderley, secret and silent as it had always been, the grey stone shining in the moonlight of my dream. Time could not spoil the beauty of those walls, nor of the place itself, as it lay like a jewel in the hollow of a hand. The grass sloped down towards the sea, which was a sheet of silver lying calm under the moon, like a lake undisturbed by wind or storm. I turned again to the house, and I saw that the garden had run wild, just as the woods had done. Weeds were everywhere. But moonlight can play strange tricks with the imagination, even with a dreamer's imagination. As I stood there, I could swear that the house was not an empty shell, but lived and breathed as it had lived before. Light came from the windows, the curtains blew softly in the night air, and there, in the library, the door stood half open as we had left it, with my handkerchief on the table beside the bowl of autumn flowers.

Then a cloud came over the moon, like a dark hand across a face. The memories left me. I looked again at an empty shell, with no whisper of the past about its staring walls. Our fear and suffering were gone now. When I thought about Manderley in my waking hours I would not be bitter; I would think of it as it might have been, if I could have lived there without fear. I would remember the rose garden in summer, and the birds that sang there; tea under the trees, and the sound of the sea coming up to us from the shore below. I would think of the flowers blown from the bushes, and the Happy Valley. These things could never lose their freshness.

\*The name of a large estate house in its own grounds

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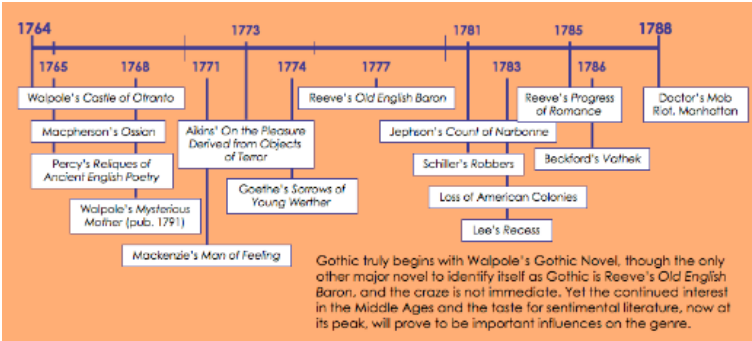
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Task 5: Access this webpage <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/articles/zvr9vk7> and using the information, create a beautiful Gothic text timeline. Ideally complete this on a sheet of A3- begin at 1764 and finish at 2024. Chart down on the timeline, the Gothic texts mentioned in the article. Make sure you leave lots of room to add the Gothic texts we will study over the course.



Spine-chillers and suspense: A timeline of Gothic fiction

Tales of terror

Gothic novels have been scaring us for 250 years.

The mid-18th Century - an era of dark, satanic mills at home and nightmarish social upheaval abroad - saw public taste shift from traditional tales of romance and adventure to an appetite for terror.

It is a wide-ranging genre which includes Frankenstein, Dracula and Wuthering Heights. The success of recent novels such as Twilight continue its popularity. This timeline spotlights key moments in the evolution of spine-tingling Gothic stories.

This article is intended as a teacher-mediated learning resource. Please note that, as the title suggest, it explores gothic themes and classic works of fiction. Teacher review is recommended prior to use in class.

1764

The Castle of Otranto: The first Gothic novel

English aristocrat Horace Walpole combines the supernatural and horrific to create the first Gothic novel.

Purporting to be translated from an earlier manuscript, The Castle of Otranto introduces what have become classic Gothic devices, such as a foreign location, a dark and ominous castle and a naïve young woman fleeing from an evil, lustful man. In a direct imitation of Shakespearean tragedy, Walpole introduces comedy to relieve the novel's most melodramatic moments.



## 4. CRITICAL WRITING TASK

Your final task is to write an impassioned response to this thesis statement:

**'ENGLISH LITERATURE ISN'T RELEVANT TODAY.'**

We don't want to overly guide you on this as we would like this to be an original and inspired response but here's some reminders of what constitutes great critical writing

- An engaging opening
- Rhetorical devices such as rhetorical questions, tripling, anadiplosis, emotive language, metaphorical language, anecdotes, etc
- A range of punctuation to ensure a clear voice to your writing
- A mixture of sentence styles and structures – can your passion be heard?
- Impressive vocabulary – use a thesaurus or google 'synonyms' to help

### Take It Further

- A motif to run through your argument
- Famous quotations to inspire your writing
- Perhaps research online for inspiration – there have been lots of articles about the Arts and funding recently. *The Guardian* doesn't have a paywall yet!

**Aim for 2 sides of A4 handwritten or 1.5 sides typed in size 12 font.**